

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO USMISSION NATO

INFO AMCONSUL MILAN

SECSTATE WASHDC 7015

CONFIDENTIAL ROME 12974

FOR AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, NATO, IT

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE PRESS BRIEFINGS IN ITALY

1. I AM SURE YOU KNOW THAT ANTI-NATO FORCES IN ITALIAN POLITICS HAVE MOUNTED AN IMPRESSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN WHOSE EARLY GOAL WAS TO PRECLUDE GOI FROM RESPONDING POSITIVELY IN EVENT US OR NATO MIGHT HAVE REQUESTED THAT ITALY ACCEPT FACILITIES FORCED OUT OF GREECE. PROPAGANDA EFFORT NOW EXPANDING FROM IMAGINARY NEW BASES TO LARGER QUESTION OF ITALIAN ROLE IN ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SECURITY SYSTEMS IN MEDITERRANEAN.

2. WE ARE WORKING ON A PROGRAM THROUGH WHICH WE HOPE TO REACQUAINT INFLUENTIAL ITALIANS WITH THEIR OWN SECURITY NEEDS AND HOW NATO HELPS MEET THEM. IN ADDITION, USIS ROME PLANS WHAT SHOULD BE USEFUL SERIES OF NATO-RELATED SEMINARS IN CONJUNCTION WITH USIS NATO.

3. IN THIS VEIN, I UNDERSTAND YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO RETURN TO ITALY FOR A FEW DAYS IN THE FALL TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF NATO WITH SMALL GROUPS OF HIGH LEVEL ITALIAN JOURNALISTS.

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4. I BELIEVE WE COULD SET UP SEVERAL OFF-THE-RECORD BACKGROUNDER

IN MILAN AND ROME THROUGH WHICH YOU COULD MAKE THE KIND OF
HARD HITTING PRESENTATION THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE SOME OF THE PRESS
TO STAND UP FOR NATO OR TO AT LEAST NOT BE TAKEN IN BY PROPAGANDA
ON PHONY ISSUES.

5. I UNDERSTAND THE PERIOD AROUND OCTOBER 16-18 WOULD
BE BEST FOR BOTH MILAN AND ROME, BUT WE CAN, OF COURSE, ARRANGE
MEETINGS TO FIT IN WITH YOUR PLANS. I HOPE YOU CAN INDEED
CONSIDER SUCH A VISIT AT WHAT COULD BE A CRITICAL JUNCTURE WHEN
MANY ARE CLAMORING FOR ITALY TO REEXAMINE HER SECURITY NEEDS AND
ROLE IN NATO. VOLPE

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